



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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Baucus Hails Senate Vote for Suspension of Cuba Travel Ban, Looks Toward Enactment

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) released the following statement today in response to the Senate vote to suspend enforcement of the Cuba travel ban:

"Today's vote is a clear and undeniable sign that the end is near for the Cuba travel ban. My colleagues in the Senate voiced their overwhelming opposition to the travel restrictions today, by a 59-36 margin. The same amendment passed the House last month by a vote of 227-188.

These floor votes indicate - beyond a shadow of doubt - that Congress believes that it is time to end the travel ban, which has proved to be illogical, ineffective, and harmful to the Cuban people. It is time move ahead with a new and wiser Cuba policy and I encourage the Congressional conferees and the President to respect the will of a majority of Congress.

This vote is also a strong repudiation of the President's recent announcement that his Administration plans to tighten and increase the travel restrictions. The majority of Congress and a majority of Americans disagree with that policy, as today's vote makes clear. It's time to put good policy -- and the needs of the Cuban citizens -- before politics.

I am proud to have worked with my good friends - Senators Craig, Enzi, and Dorgan - on this effort. When we introduced legislation last spring to repeal the travel ban, we knew we had the support of a majority of our colleagues. The votes today vindicate our fight.

Last month, I traveled to Cuba and met with Oswaldo Paya, leader of the legendary Varela Project, the referendum to bring democratic reforms to Cuba. Also at the meeting were the wives of three jailed dissidents. Their stories of fear and uncertainty for their husbands and families confirmed the urgent need to continue our fight to reform our failed Cuba policy. Today's vote was an important achievement for those women and every other Cuban who has been unfairly persecuted.

I look forward to seeing suspension of the travel ban signed into law. Lifting the travel ban would once and for all prove that we will not allow the actions of a dictator to influence our efforts to help the Cuban people achieve democracy.

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